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XXI.—JOHN CROWNE AND AMERICA

To those who look askance when the drama of the last forty years of the seventeenth century is mentioned, it may be a doubtful honor to connect a minor Restoration playwright with the early history of America. But the fact remains that John Crowne, one of the most prolific of the dramatists of this period, was for three years a resident of New England and a student at Harvard College. He is now remembered chiefly as the author of *Sir Courtly Nice*, a comedy which held the boards for almost a hundred years.

Crowne's life has given some trouble to investigators. So recent a work as *The Cambridge History of English Literature* declares that his "birthday and parentage . . . are alike unknown," but that "it appears probable that he was the son of William Crowne, who emigrated to Nova Scotia, and that he was born about 1640."¹ For over a century and a half the assertion of John Dennis, the well-known critic of the early eighteenth century, that Crowne was the son of an Independent minister who lived in Nova Scotia,² was religiously copied by one biographer after another. In 1888, however, Mr. A. H. Bullen cast doubt upon Dennis's testimony in his article on Crowne in the *Dictionary of National Biography*,³ and in the same year the late Dr. J. S. Fogg of Boston found documentary evidence that William Crowne was not a preacher but a

¹ A. T. Bartholomew in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, New York, 1912, VIII, p. 212.

² John Dennis, *Original Letters, Familiar, Moral, and Critical*, London, 1721, I, p. 48.

³ *The Dictionary of National Biography*, 1888, XIII, p. 243.

colonel in the British army.⁴ In 1891 further light was thrown upon the subject by Professor Archibald MacMechan of Dalhousie College, who had been working in the Nova Scotian archives,⁵ and in 1903 by Dr. W. H. Davis of Washington, D. C.⁶ From the researches of these scholars and my own investigations, I have been able to prove that John Crowne, the playwright, was the son of William Crowne, who, as a member of the household of the Earl of Arundel, accompanied that nobleman on an embassy to the court of Ferdinand II of Germany in 1636 and published an account of the journey the following year.⁷ In 1638, through the favor of the earl, this William Crowne became Rouge Dragon in the College of Arms.⁸ During the period of the Civil War and Commonwealth he was a lieutenant-colonel in the Parliamentary army,⁹ and in 1654 he was returned to Parliament for Bridgnorth.¹⁰ Two years later Colonel Crowne sank his

⁴ J. S. H. Fogg, *John Crowne—Dramatist and Poet. The Maine Historical and Genealogical Register* (1888), iv, p. 189.

⁵ Archibald MacMechan, *John Crowne, a Biographical Note. Modern Language Notes* (1891), vi, coll. 277-285.

⁶ Wm. H. Davis, *Colonel William Crowne and his Family. The New England Historical and Genealogical Register* (1903), lvii, pp. 406-410.

⁷ William Crowne, *A True Relation of All the Remarkable Places and Passages Observed in the Travels of Thomas, Lord Howard, Earle of Arundel and Surrey, Ambassadour Extraordinary to Ferdinando II, 1636*, London, 1637. See the dedication and pp. 1 and 70.

⁸ Edwin B. Chancellor, *Historical Richmond*, London, 1885, pp. 166-169. Wilhelm Grosse, *John Crownes Komödien und burleske Dichtung* [Leipzig], 1903, p. 6, was inclined to doubt the assertion of Oldys that William Crowne was Rouge Dragon. His letters patent are dated Sept. 14, 1638. Cf. Mark Noble, *A History of the College of Arms*, London, 1805, pp. 70, 93-94, 251.

⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, 1650, pp. 288, 505, 509.

¹⁰ Henry T. Weyman, *The Members of Parliament from Bridgnorth. Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, Fourth Series, v, p. 60.

earnings in an adventure which made him joint proprietor of the province of Nova Scotia with Colonel Thomas Temple, and in the summer of 1657 the two came to America. A division of the province was recorded in the Suffolk County Registry of Deeds in September, 1657, whereby Crowne became the sole proprietor of the lesser half of the territory; that is, of a stretch of land which we may designate roughly as the Penobscot River country.¹¹ After occupying the land for a short time Crowne leased it to Temple for a term of years at an annual rental of 110 l. Temple was an unscrupulous rascal, and after the first year failed to pay the rent, though he refused to give up the territory.

Thus matters stood at the Restoration when Colonel Crowne returned to England to serve as Rouge Dragon at the coronation of Charles II, and to defend his and Temple's right to Nova Scotia against certain persons who were endeavoring to procure a new royal grant. The old proprietors established their claim, and Temple promised Crowne to restore his moiety and to make reparation; but again he was faithless, and although the Colonel carried the matter to the New England courts, he could get no justice. In 1667 a still greater misfortune befell him. By the treaty of Breda Charles II ceded Nova Scotia to the French, and three years later Temple relinquished it to them.¹² Meanwhile Colonel Crowne had returned to New England in 1662, and lived in Boston and Roxbury until 1667. In the latter year he took up his residence in the newly settled town of Mendon, where he acted as town

¹¹*Suffolk County (Massachusetts) Registry of Deeds*, Boston, 1880-1906, III, p. 108.

¹²J. P. Baxter, *Documentary History of the State of Maine*, Portland, 1907, x, pp. 28-29.

register for five years. He afterwards returned to Boston, where he died in 1683 at the ripe age of seventy-five.¹³

Concerning the mother of John Crowne our information is scanty. At some time between 1635 and 1640 William Crowne married Agnes, the daughter of Richard Mackworth of Betton Strange, County Salop.¹⁴ She had previously been married to Richard Watts of Hertfordshire, who had died in 1635.¹⁵ She had one brother, Humphrey, who was prominent in political affairs during the Commonwealth. He was governor of Shrewsbury for a time, and later was a member of Cromwell's Council of State. Agnes Mackworth Crowne was the mother of three children, of whom John, the playwright, was the eldest. She did not accompany her husband to New England in 1657. She was alive apparently in 1674, when Colonel Crowne was ordered "to return to his wife" in England,¹⁶ but the date of her death is unknown.

The date of John Crowne's birth has hitherto been a matter of some uncertainty. Gosse placed it at about 1640,¹⁷ and MacMechan, on the basis of Crowne's attend-

¹³ Colonel Crowne's will was probated on Feb. 26, 1683. *Suffolk County Massachusetts Probate Records*, vol. VI, part 2.

¹⁴ Thos. Blore, *History of the Antiquities of the County of Rutland*, Stanford, 1811, p. 226.

¹⁵ Robt. Clutterbuck, *The History of the Antiquities of the County of Hertford*, London, 1827, III, p. 305.

¹⁶ On April 28, 1674 the General Court of Massachusetts issued the following order: "This Court taking into consideration that Collonell William Crowne hath lived here a considerable time from his wife judge meete to Order that the said Colonell do take passage for England & return thither to his wife by the next opportunity of shipping after these ships that are now ready to sail under penalty of twenty pounds according to the law." A MS. record of the Suffolk County Court in the Boston Athenaeum. I am indebted to Mr. John H. Edmonds, curator of the Gay Collection in the Harvard College Library, for this reference.

¹⁷ Edmund Gosse, *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, London, 1889, p. 58.

ance at Harvard College between 1657 and 1660, accepted the same date;¹⁸ but neither had any direct evidence to offer. In fact, however, Crowne himself affords us the information desired; for on September 14, 1660, in a deposition he gives his age as "about twenty yeares."¹⁹ His birthplace has likewise been in dispute, but we may be sure that he was born in England, not in Nova Scotia. This appears from a study of his father's life, which I have traced in considerable detail from his marriage (probably in 1638) to 1657. It was not until 1656, when the future playwright was sixteen years old, that the elder Crowne had any connection with America. John Crowne was doubtless born in Shropshire, where the family estate of his mother was situated, and where in 1644, four years after his birth, his father was serving as secretary to Lord Denbigh, a Parliamentary leader.²⁰

Concerning John Crowne's education in England we may only infer. His father was a prosperous and intelligent man, and doubtless procured for his son whatever advantages were to be had. Father and son came to America in 1657, and the boy must by that time have made some progress in the classics in order to enter Harvard

¹⁸ MacMechan, *op. cit.*, col. 282.

¹⁹ This deposition is reprinted by J. S. H. Fogg, *John Crowne—Poet and Dramatist. The Maine Historical and Genealogical Register*, iv, pp. 189-190. The original document was probably in Dr. Fogg's own collection, which has been dispersed since his death. Inquiries have failed to reveal its present habitat. Grosse, in his monograph, *John Crownes Komödien und burleske Dichtung*, p. 10, concludes that Crowne was born in 1645 on the basis of a statement in the dedication to *Pandion and Amphigeneia*, a prose romance, published in January 1665. Crowne there wrote: "I was scarcely 20 years of age when I fancied it." It is evident that between the fancying of it and the printing, several years elapsed.

²⁰ *Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, Fourth Report, 1874, London, 1875, p. 267.

College, as he did in the autumn of that year. The entrance requirements at that time included ability "to understand Tully, or such like Classical Latine author *ex tempore*, and to make and speake true Latine in verse and prose . . . and to decline perfectly the paradigms of nounes and verbes in the Greek tongue."²¹

The evidence for Crowne's college career, though not extensive, is sufficient. In an early Steward's Book, still extant in the Harvard archives, there is an entry recording the payment of 2 l. 2 s. by Colonel Crowne on September 2, 1657 to Thomas Chesholme, the Steward, for his son's tuition.²² J. L. Sibley also discovered payments by the Colonel for the quarters ending December 5, 1657 and June 5, 1659.²³ In addition to these financial items, we have a curious piece of testimony from John Crowne himself. In an undated deposition, describing the reception of the regicides Goffe and Whaley in Boston and Cambridge in 1660, he refers to Harvard College as "the university of New-England, of which the deponent was a member." He states further that he then "boarded in the house of Mr. [John] Norton," the minister of the principal church in Boston.²⁴

When the future playwright was a student at Harvard, "the College was," in the words of Josiah Quincy, "conducted as a theological institution in strict coincidence with the nature of the political constitution of the colony;

²¹ *New England's First Fruits, in respect to the Progress of Learning in the Colledge at Cambridge in Massachusetts-bay* . . . London, 1643, p. 13.

²² *The Steward's Book of Thomas Chesholme*, p. 323. This manuscript is in the archives of the Harvard College Library.

²³ J. L. Sibley, *Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Harvard University*, Cambridge, 1873, I, p. 577.

²⁴ George Chalmers, *Political Annals of the Present United Colonies*, London, 1780, Bk. I, pp. 263-264.

having religion for its basis and chief object.”²⁵ As the curious reader may gather from that interesting pamphlet, *New England's First Fruits*,²⁷ published in 1643, the curriculum was made up of such studies as natural philosophy, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy among the sciences; ethics, politics, and logic among the philosophical studies; and among the languages, Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syriac. In addition a part of each week was given up to rhetoric, prosody, declamations, common-places, and disputations. The study of the Bible and the catechism was a natural part of the work, while history was assigned to the winter months, and the study of plants to the summer. The rules of conduct were very rigid, and each student had to report to his tutor at the seventh hour in the morning for prayers, and at the fifth hour at night to account for his private reading during the day. In view of such a system of education one does not wonder at the remark of Dennis concerning Crowne: “The Vivacity of his Genius made him soon grow impatient of that sullen and gloomy Education, and soon oblig’d him to get loose from it and seek his Fortune in England.”²⁷ However, it is probable that he received training that stood him in good stead in his later career, for his tragedies show a competent acquaintance with the works of such historians as Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Dio Cassius, and Josephus, on all of whom he drew largely for dramatic material.

It is probable that the youthful Crowne returned to England with his father at the close of December, 1660.

²⁵ Josiah Quincy, *History of Harvard University*, Cambridge, 1846, I, p. 3.

²⁶ *Op. cit.*, pp. 14-16.

²⁷ Dennis, *op. cit.*, I, 49.

Had he remained in New England until August, 1661,²⁸ there is reason to believe that he would have been prepared to take the first degree, but his name nowhere appears among the records of Harvard alumni. It is difficult to see that Crowne's three years in America had any permanent effect upon him. His works show no recollections of this period, and late in life in one of his dedications he contrasts "the deserts of America" with "these beautiful parts o' the world"—that is, with England.²⁹ Yet the toryism of his political views may have been a normal reaction against the ideas which prevailed in England and America during his youth, and his strong opposition to Catholicism may perhaps be traced to the Protestant theological training which he received at Harvard.

It is significant that Crowne's entry upon the career of play-writing closely follows his father's loss of the Penobscot estate as a result of the treaty of Breda. Young Crowne could no longer hope for assistance from his father, and thus turned to the drama, the field of literary endeavor most attractive at the time for the opportunities it afforded of personal influence at court and of respectable financial returns. It is safe to say, I believe, that Crowne's muse was not awakened by any inner necessity for literary expression, but that he was a dramatist by force of circumstances. Had the American estate of his father been free from the unscrupulous control of Thomas Temple, and had international treaties been more considerate of the rights of individuals, Crowne, by his own confession, would not have "run into that madness call'd Poetry,"

²⁸ Albert Matthews, *Harvard Commencement Days, 1642-1916. Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, XVIII, p. 379, conjectures that August 13th was the commencement date in 1661.

²⁹ John Crowne, *Dramatic Works*, ed. J. Maidment and W. H. Logan, Edinburgh, 1873-74, IV, p. 348.

nor have inhabited "that Bedlam call'd a Stage."³⁰
 From the first his muse was commercial, and even in later
 years she

Kept shop, like a good creditable cit,
 But traded in damn'd never thriving wit.³¹

Since his first aim was to make a living, he was a keen observer of the conditions of the time and followed the taste of his public with an eye to the ultimate returns. Thus his works run the gamut of all the types of drama then in vogue, and reflect remarkably well the requirements of Restoration audiences.

Crowne began his career as a dramatist with *Juliana* (1671), a tragi-comedy of the type which Dryden had begun to develop several years earlier in *The Rival Ladies*; but almost immediately he turned his attention to tragedy, and in spite of his apparent lack of ability in this direction, he persisted in writing mediocre tragedies throughout his life. His first serious plays were of the heroic type. *The History of Charles the Eighth of France* (1671) had only fair success on the stage, but the later two-part play, *The Destruction of Jerusalem* (1677), like Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* and Settle's *Empress of Morocco*, took the town by storm. When the vogue of the heroic drama gave way under the influence of Dryden and Otway to blank-verse tragedies of a less bombastic type, Crowne followed in the steps of his rivals. Of these later tragedies *Darius* (1688) is the best. The characters are rather tame, to be sure, but with the slender historical action is skilfully united a romantic sub-plot from the *Hippolytus* of Euripides, and many of the lines have real

³⁰ John Crowne, *Henry the Sixth, the First Part. With the Murder of Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. As it is Acted at the Dukes Theatre*, London, 1681. See the dedication.

³¹ Crowne, *Dramatic Works*, III, p. 376.

poetic quality. The majority of Crowne's tragedies have their sources in classical historians and dramatists; two of them are in part indebted to the works of contemporary French tragic poets; while two others are rehashed versions of the Shakespearean trilogy of *Henry VI*.

Crowne's tragedies outnumber his comedies. He is remembered by posterity, however, chiefly as a comic dramatist, and he is often happy in his realistic portrayal of London life. His comic gift does not compare favorably with the light and graceful humor of Etherege, with the heavier masculine irony of Wycherley, or with the scintillating wit of Congreve; but he had a genuine feeling for the incongruous, and a talent for writing satire which, if caustic and coarse, is frequently very clever. Like other Restoration comic poets Crowne is much indebted to Molière both for matter and method. In his first comedy, *The Countrey Wit* (1675), he borrowed the sub-plot, sometimes even to the extent of translation, from *Le Sicilien, ou L'Amour Peintre*. Again, the minor plot of *The English Frier* (1689),—a caustic satire against priests,—is adapted from *Tartuffe* and *L'Avare*. Crowne's best comedies, however, are derived from Spanish sources. *Sir Courtly Nice* (1685), to which I shall return anon, is adapted from Moreto's *No Peude Ser*; and *The Married Beau* (1694) presents in a characteristic Restoration setting the famous story of *El Curioso Impertinente* from *Don Quixote*. Crowne's political comedy, *City Politiques* (1683), is a purely native growth. Of its connection with Charles II I shall speak presently.

Perhaps the most interesting phase of Crowne's career is his relation to Charles II. With the beginning of that relationship is associated a curious chapter of literary history, and at its close comes Crowne's most noteworthy contribution to the dramatic literature of his age. In the

early years of the second decade after the Restoration, John Wilmot, the profligate Earl of Rochester, ruled the fortunes of those dramatists who depended for a livelihood upon the success of their plays among the courtiers. To his influence was largely due the private presentation of Settle's *Empress of Morocco* at Whitehall before the king, as well as the later popularity of that playwright among the younger artists of the town. Dryden had earlier been on friendly terms with Rochester and had dedicated a play to him, but in the meantime Rochester had quarrelled with John Sheffield, the Earl of Mulgrave. When Mulgrave later became Dryden's patron, friendly relations between Dryden and Rochester ceased and from that time until his death Rochester was Dryden's enemy. Such was the situation in 1673, when Settle's *Empress of Morocco* was brought out by his printers in a special edition adorned with "sculptures," and priced at two shillings, twice the customary charge for play-books. In the dedication Settle took occasion to refer satirically to Dryden and the ill success of his latest play. Dryden was already jealous of the unmerited popularity of his younger rival, and he was not slow in retorting. Assisted by Shadwell and Crowne, he replied in an anonymous pamphlet made up mainly of abuse and quibbles.³² Settle returned the compliment in kind, and, supported by Rochester and Buckingham, had altogether the better of the quarrel.³³

The prominence which Settle had won by his successful encounter with Dryden soon caused the fickle Rochester to withdraw his favor. The opportunity came in the summer

³² *Notes and Observations on the Empress of Morocco, Or some of the Errata's to be Printed instead of the Sculptures with the Second Edition of that Play*, London, 1674.

³³ F. C. Brown, *Elkanah Settle, His Life and Works*, Chicago, 1910, pp. 57-58.

of 1674, when Princess Mary, the elder daughter of the Duke of York, desired a masque for court performance. Because of his commanding influence Rochester was enabled to select Crowne to write the piece. Thus in one move he could both curb the vainglorious Settle and mortify Dryden, whose function it was as poet-laureate to compose such entertainments. The selection of Crowne as masque-writer was not due to any peculiar qualifications which he possessed for the task, but rather to the malice of Rochester. The result was the masque *Calisto; or the Chaste Nymph*, elaborately performed by the two princesses and other young noblewomen in December 1674, and in the following January. The production of *Calisto* was a noteworthy event in Crowne's life. It brought him into the place of prominence in literary circles which Settle had held but recently, and it marks the beginning of his relations as a playwright with Charles II. As a result of his masque, Crowne experienced for the first time the "princely bounty" of the Merry Monarch. In the next year he was again honored by Charles, who found the low comedy elements of *The Countrey Wit* much to his liking.

The favor which Crowne had come to enjoy from King Charles as a result of *Calisto* and *The Countrey Wit* was no doubt pleasing to his father on the other side of the Atlantic. Hope of securing compensation for the loss of his estate in the Penobscot region, so that he might leave behind a better provision for his children, led the elder Crowne to suggest to his literary son that he capitalize his favor with royalty and petition for the proprietorship of Mounthope, near the Plymouth settlements. Accordingly, in 1679 Crowne appealed to the King and Privy Council, but the Governor and Council of New Plymouth objected so strenuously and with so much right that the Lords of Trade agreed to deny Crowne's petition, "whatever his

pretensions to the King's favor on some previous occasion." ³⁴ Despairing of obtaining Mounthope, Crowne petitioned in the following year, and again doubtless at his father's suggestion, for Boston Neck, a rich strip of shore in the Narragansett country between the Pettaquamscutt river and the western entrance to Providence bay, but nothing came of it. ³⁵

Meanwhile Crowne aligned himself definitely with the Tory party in the struggles which developed out of the religious and political turmoil of the so-called Popish Plot. In *The Ambitious Statesman* (1679) and *Thyestes* (1681) he touched upon the subject only incidentally, but he emphatically defended the sanctity of royalty and violently attacked the priesthood. At this time also he adapted the second and third parts of the Shakespearean trilogy of *Henry VI* for partisan purposes. In *The Miseries of Civil-War* (1680) he pointed to the miseries resulting from the War of the Roses and bade England beware of religious fanaticism. In *Henry the Sixth, the First Part* (1681) he used the villainous cardinal as the vehicle of a satire against Catholicism. The most interesting and important of Crowne's political satires, however, is the comedy entitled *City Politiques*. The circumstances of its production illustrate again the peculiar favor in which Crowne was held by Charles II. The political nature of the play caused it to be held up in the offices of the Lord Chamberlain, Henry Bennet, who, according to Dennis, was secretly a Whig, and therefore hindered every effort at stage satire against his party. Dennis is also authority for the statement that Crowne at length grew impatient of the delay, and relying upon his favor with King Charles,

³⁴ *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1677-80, pp. 319, 384-385, 435-436.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 477, 492.

secured a royal mandate to have the play acted.³⁶ Most of the major characters in *City Politiques* are thinly-veiled caricatures of leading Whigs. Thus the Podesta represents Shaftesbury as the leader of his party; the Catholic bricklayer is intended for Stephen College, the Protestant joiner; Dr. Panchy is an impersonation of "Dr." Titus Oates; while in the person of Craffy, Crowne satirizes the chief Whig poets of the day, such as Shadwell, Settle, and Samuel Pordage.

The clever political satire in *City Politiques* must have been very pleasing to the Tories and to the king himself. In 1684, therefore,—when Shaftesbury was dead, and his opponents were enjoying their power,—Crowne chose a favorable moment to plead with the king for a reward. He had ample testimony of the enmity which the Whigs bore him for his satire against their leaders. He was weary, moreover, of the uncertainty which confronted even his best efforts as a playwright. Then too, he was conscious that the government owed him something for the loss of his father's estate. With these things in mind he asked King Charles for an office which should give him a comfortable income and secure his elder years against misfortune. According to Dennis, the king was willing to grant the request, but being a great lover of merry comedies, insisted that Crowne should write him another play.³⁷ Crowne attempted to excuse himself on the ground that he was a slow plotter, but the king supplied him with a Spanish comedy, Moreto's *No Peude Ser*, and there was no escape. At length *Sir Courtly Nice* was evolved from the Spanish plot, and the play was placed in rehearsal. Good success seemed to await it, and the author looked forward to the fulfilment of the king's promise. But Crowne was born under an unlucky star. On the very day of the last

³⁶ Dennis, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 49-50.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 51-52.

rehearsal the profligate king was seized with a fit and three days later he died. With his death perished Crowne's favor at court, and the possibility of his advancement to a position of independence. Even the later extraordinary success of *Sir Courtly Nice* upon the stage must have given him cold comfort for the loss of his royal patron.

The story of the last twenty-odd years of Crowne's life may be briefly told. It is the story of his renewed struggle to make a living from the theatre, and of his long, patient, and futile effort to recover his lost patrimony in America. During the short reign of James II, Crowne was aware of the uselessness of petitioning the Catholic king, but the turn of events which placed William and Mary on the throne gave him renewed hopes. While Queen Mary was alive Crowne did not suffer want. She remembered that when she was a princess in her 'teens at the court of her royal uncle, the now ageing playwright had written a masque for her amusement, and as a result he enjoyed her "princely bounty."³⁸ With her death, however, he again felt the pinch of poverty, and addressed frequent petitions to King William for the recovery of his estate, but all in vain.³⁹ The accession of Queen Anne in 1702 brought a modicum of relief. Like her older sister, she too remembered the masque and his part in it, and annually during his last years, upon petition, he received a grant of 50l.⁴⁰

The date of Crowne's death, like that of his birth, has been shrouded in uncertainty. A. T. Bartholomew, whose account of Crowne in *The Cambridge History of English Literature* I have already quoted, says that he "seems to have been alive in 1701."⁴¹ Most of the older bio-

³⁸ Crowne, *Dramatic Works*, IV, p. 350.

³⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial*, 1700, pp. 344-345, 430, 445, 474, 663-664.

⁴⁰ *Calendar of Treasury Papers*, 1702-1707, p. 218.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, VIII, p. 215.

graphers, however, following a manuscript note by Oldys in a copy of Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatic Poets* to the effect that Crowne was alive in 1703, state that he died shortly afterwards. As a matter of fact he lived on for more than a decade into the eighteenth century. Official treasury papers record grants of money to him as late as November 30, 1706,⁴² but thereafter they are silent. Presumably the charity of Queen Anne, like that of others, had its limits. The now poverty-stricken and superannuated playwright lingered on for another half-dozen years. He died late in April 1712, and was buried in the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields on the twenty-seventh of the month. Although it was a common practice at St. Giles to record the parentage of the deceased, in the case of John Crowne only his name and burial date are given — mute testimony of the obscurity into which the once popular Restoration playwright had fallen.⁴³

No likeness of Crowne has come down to us, so far as I have been able to ascertain. But we know something, at least, of his personal appearance from the recollections of an old man which appeared in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1745. "Many a cup of metheglin," he writes, "have I drank with little starch'd Johnny Crown; we called him so from the stiff unalterable primness of his long

⁴² *Calendar of Treasury Papers, 1702-1707*, p. 474.

⁴³ The "Burial" Book of the church of St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Oldys in his manuscript annotations in a copy of Langbaine's *Account of the English Dramatic Poets*, cited above, stated that Crowne was buried in St. Giles-in-the-Fields. Sir William Musgrave in his *Obituary Prior to 1800*, II, p. 116 (*Publications of the Harleian Society*, XLV, 1900) recorded Crowne's death date as 1712, but failed to give the source of his information. It may be interesting to note in passing that St. Giles is the burial place of such well-known literary figures of the seventeenth century as James Shirley, Andrew Marvel, and Sir Roger L'Estrange.

cravat.”⁴⁴ However much Crowne, the Restoration playwright, may have differed from Crowne the student in Harvard College, he seems to have retained to the last a prim, puritanical mode of dress as the most striking feature of his outward semblance.

To summarize. Among the dramatists of the Restoration period, Crowne was a writer of distinctly second-rate talent whose works are comparable to those of Thomas Shadwell and Mrs. Aphra Behn. Since his plays represent practically all of the types of drama then in vogue, and since he always wrote with an eye to the financial rewards, a study of his dramas gives us a clearer insight into the requirements of Restoration audiences than are revealed in the works of men of greater genius. By virtue of patient industry, he became a skilful workman, and in his tragedies he substituted cleverness in adaptation and construction of plots for the richer power to characterize well and write memorable lines. He was much more at home in comedy, where he possessed a small but natural gift. He went to school to Molière for much of his technique, and in the lighter dramas he mirrored the follies and vices of his time with admirable faithfulness, if with no great brilliancy. As a political and religious satirist, Crowne is frequently coarse and abusive, but at other times he shows a firm grasp of his material and is very clever in his hits. The poetry of his serious dramas is almost entirely lacking in inspiration, beauty, or breadth of vision. In the prose dialogue of his comedies, however, he is fluent if not sparkling, and the easy-flowing blank verse of his only poetical comedy, *The Married Beau*, is better than the great bulk of his work.

ARTHUR FRANKLIN WHITE.

⁴⁴ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, xv (1745), p. 99.